

BLACKER'S PLANT IS WRECKED BY FLAMES

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Firemen Have Narrow Escape from Being Caught Under Falling Walls.

**ELECTRIC WIRES
IMPERIL LIVES**

Damage Under \$10,000, but
Thrilling Work Saved Whole-
sale Business Section—Half-
Dead Horse Staggered
Out and Was
Shot.

Fire last night completely ~~destroyed~~ the wood and coal establishment of A. Blacker, at Seventeenth and Cary Streets, and gave the department a thrilling battle to prevent a serious conflagration in the wholesale business district. The loss proper was hardly more than \$10,000. Childrey & Reinhart, pattern and model makers, had

machinery and workshops on the second story of the Blacker building, once occupied by the Trigg Shipyard Company, and everything was lost.

After taking desperate chances with live wires that sparked and sizzled in the street, the members of engine company No. 7 had a narrow escape from death when the south wall, next to the E. A. Saunders warehouse, toppled over.

without the least warning. It gave one quick sway, and then crashed to the ground. On a freight car a few feet away six men were working a pump. They were engaged in the effort to save themselves as the debris hit around their feet. Flying brick struck several firemen, but no one was painfully or seriously hurt.

Boy Had Narrow Escape.

When the alarm was turned in at 11:45 o'clock, the firemen, with the blaze from the burning structure. Another alarm sent six engines to the scene, but the flames had gained big headway, and the main effort was to confine them to the Blacker plant and the building on the corner of Third and the street, and the Well Court.

pany's establishment, which adjoins Blacker's on the Cary Street side. The wind sent clouds of sparks toward the Gas Works, creating some apprehension, although the distance was too great to cause the possibility of an explosion.

Just how and in what part of the building the fire started was not clearly

deformed. Strother West, employed by Blacker, was asleep in the place, and managed to get out and give the alarm. By this time, however, the reflection made the police get busy, the result being that the engines were soon on the way. Had West remained longer in his room he would have been killed.

Perhaps the most sensational incident outside of the danger of live wires was the discovery of a dangerous well,

The horse dropped at the first shot and the horse there, almost buried under a flood of water. Mr. Blacker said this morning that he had only two

horses in the place, and he was not certain whether the other was saved. A gray horse and a gray mule were rescued early and driven up Cary Street, but Mr. Blacker would not say more.

There was considerable delay in cutting the electric wires. It made the work of the firemen difficult and dangerous, and right in the midst of it, Policeman Williams was struck and killed. He was caught in the wires of the drenched and shivering crowd that watched. Immediately under the Chesapeake and Ohio viaduct a wire was dancing on the pavement. Without the least ceremony or fear, Jennings stepped on it, took it in his hand and held it against a pole and chopped it off with an axe. It was clear of the ground, but dangled a few feet above it and was shot out blue and red streaks of fire as the rain touched it. There were hundreds of wires and the crowd danced.

The engines were pouring streams of water into the Blacker building from all directions. It was a two-story

brick structure, with many windows and doors, and for nearly an hour the water went in by the thousands of gallons without subduing the fire. Dry wood and coal were stored there in large quantities. The division walked and the roof were quickly consumed by the heat, fortunately, being kept within or sent skyward. After the roar subsided the Saunders warehouse was badly damaged and scorched, and steamers played upon it all the time to good effect. It was the same with the Carnegie house. The top ridges of the Carnegie

Street wall of the burning building were red hot, and chunks of it toppled over under the weight of water pressure, making a noise like the explosion of a gun.

When the second floor gave way, the falling machinery brought down the Childrey machinery. There were other roaring sounds which created more or less alarm.

Not Much Insurance.

Chief Shaw said this morning that the loss would run anywhere from \$8,000 to \$10,000. He did not know to what extent the Sydnor property and machinery had been damaged by water, as much of it had to be thrown out as a means of protection. Blackwell has a policy for \$1,500 on his building, but the insurance companies have

ing with one of the companies represented by E. A. Catlin. He had ordered a policy for \$1,500 on his stock but was not certain whether it had been actually issued. He had applied to the agent of the Realty Bond an

to the Ag...
... Company, the agent having in-
formed him, he said, that he would
call by in a day or two for the money.
It could not be ascertained what was
the value of the Childrey outfit or
the amount of insurance carried, if
any.
The burned building is a portion of
the property owned and occupied for
many years by the Talbot Machine
Works. After the failure of this com-
pany, it was rented by the heirs of